



Missouri Health Care for All

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Comments in Support of the Proposed Medicaid Section 1115 Research and Demonstration Waiver “Mental Health Crisis Prevention Project”

May 18, 2016

Missouri Health Care for All is a statewide, non-partisan, faith-and-community based, grassroots movement dedicated to the principle that every Missourian deserves access to quality, affordable health care. We have nearly 13,000 individuals and more than 200 organizations engaged in our movement, including faith communities, community groups, and consumers across the state.

We support of the proposed Section 1115 demonstration waiver for the Mental Health Crisis Prevention Project.

As part of our grassroots organizing work, Missouri Health Care for All speaks with individuals and families all over the state who are affected by lack of access to health care. From Joplin to Dexter to St. Louis, we frequently hear stories of Missourians who were unable to access critical mental health services at a time in their lives when they most needed them. Data shows that mental and substance use disorders are among the top conditions causing disability, and our conversations with Missouri citizens are consistent with that data.

By providing early intervention services to young adults experiencing a mental health or substance abuse crisis, the proposed demonstration project would provide services to young adults at the time when it is most beneficial. This services will put our young people on paths to independence and health rather than disability.

Left untreated, mental health and substance use disorders can worsen and result in significant costs to families, employers, our public systems, and of course to patients themselves. Early intervention is a cost-effective means of addressing these conditions, generating substantial state savings in health costs, criminal and juvenile justice costs, educational costs and lost productivity.

Missouri Health Care for All strongly encourages the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to approve Missouri’s proposed 1115 waiver.

Sincerely,

Jen Bersdale
Executive Director